

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

March 13, 2018

President Donald J. Trump  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20500

President Trump:

Earlier this month, in the immediate aftermath of the tragic shooting in Parkland, Florida that prematurely took the lives of 17 high school students and educators; you said that “no child, no teacher should ever be in danger in an American school.” We agree. Providing a safe and inclusive learning environment for our children is a bipartisan goal, one shared by your predecessors and by members of Congress on both sides of the aisle. We write to you with great concern regarding your FY19 budget proposal to reduce funding for critical school climate, safety and violence prevention programs administered by the US Department of Education (ED) – specifically, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Title IV-A Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grant program and the Project Prevent and Project School Emergency Response to Violence (SERV) programs.

Despite the fact that one in five kids living in the United States shows signs or symptoms of a mental health disorder, there is just one school psychologist for every 1,400 students. Sadly, the lack of school-based mental health professionals contributes to the fact that nearly 80 percent of children in this country who need mental health services won’t ever receive them. Our nation has already suffered through more than 230 school shootings since the December 2012 massacre at Sandy Hook Elementary School.<sup>1</sup> Even as we rightfully mourn for the more than 130 victims who lost their lives in these senseless tragedies, we must be mindful that the hundreds of victims who survived through these incidents of intense violence will carry scars of trauma and anxiety for the rest of their lives.

Your proposed FY19 budget eliminates or significantly cuts the only federal programs that are intended to support positive school climate and mental health services, school-based violence prevention, and aid in the response to restore normalcy after a traumatic incident such as a school shooting. The Administration’s budget proposes cutting more than \$400 million total from these programs, and a 37 percent reduction in national activities to support school safety.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/02/15/us/school-shootings-sandy-hook-parkland.html>


First authorized by the bipartisan Every Student Succeeds Act, the Title IV-A Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grant program sends funds to local educational agencies (LEAs) via formula to improve school climate, student health, and student safety. Despite bipartisan agreement to authorize this new program at \$1.6 billion, your FY19 budget proposes total elimination of the program, which is underfunded for FY18 at just \$400 million. Title IV-A is the only currently-funded federal program to support school climate and student health and wellness, including access to mental health services. Subpart 3 of ESEA Title IV-F provides ED the authority to fund national activities related to school safety, including Project Prevent and Project SERV programs. Project Prevent provides funds to (LEAs) to serve at-risk students who have been exposed to pervasive violence, breaking the cycle and leading to a safer and improved school environment. Project SERV, which received \$68 million in FY17, supplements funding to cover the cost of post-incident recovery, stabilizing students' and faculties' lives and restoring a sense of safety and security to schools affected by tragedy. While your budget proposes \$43 million in school safety national activities for school-based efforts to combat the opioid epidemic, it contains zero dollars for Project Prevent and Project Serve. Funding to assist schools in substance abuse prevention and treatment should not come at the cost of violence prevention and response.

Title IV-A, Project Prevent, and Project SERV are common-sense programs and evidence of bipartisan support for federal funding to support school-based violence prevention and response. As you work with Congress to keep schools and students safe from preventable acts of violence in our schools, we encourage you to honor your word by fully funding these critical programs.

Sincerely,



Anthony G. Brown  
Member of Congress



David N. Cicilline  
Member of Congress



Alma S. Adams, Ph.D.  
Member of Congress



Nanette D. Barragán  
Member of Congress



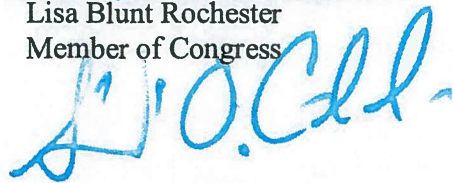
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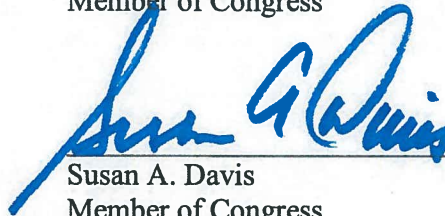
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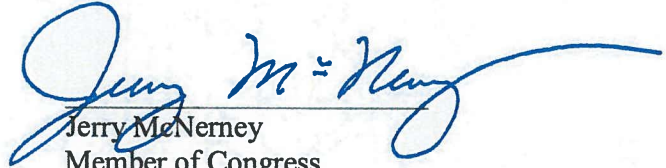
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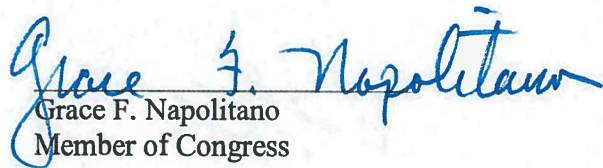
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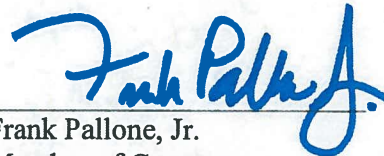
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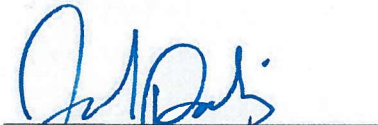
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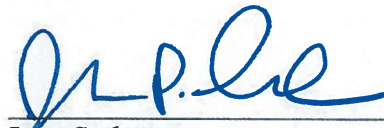
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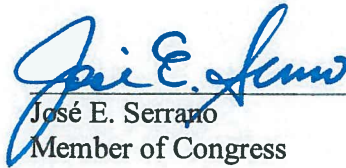
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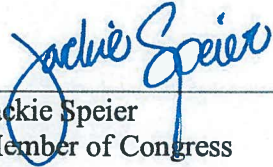
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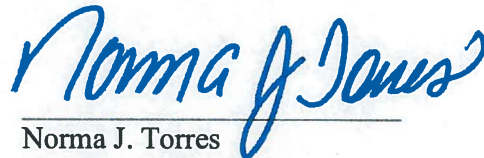
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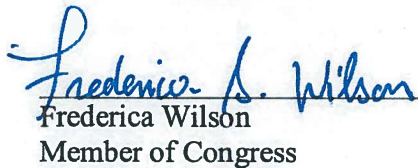
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cc: Secretary Betsy DeVos, Department of Education